

# **Bluefin Tuna Management - 2015**

**HMS Advisory Panel Meeting;  
September 2015**



## **2015: A Year of Transition**

- Amendment 7 (A7) effective
- Inseason actions
- ICCAT quota increase



## **Brief Summary of Bluefin A7 Measures**

- Allocation measures affecting all quota categories
  - Annual reallocation of quota from Purse Seine category
  - Codified reallocation of 68 mt to Longline category
  - Modification of Reserve category
  
- Reporting requirements for commercial categories
  - On-line reporting



## **Brief Summary of Bluefin A7 Measures**

- Pelagic Longline fishery changes
  - Gear Restricted Areas (Cape Hatteras and Gulf of Mexico)
  - Individual Bluefin Tuna Quota Program
  - Electronic Monitoring
  - Vessel Monitoring System Reporting
  
- Adjustments to General, Harpoon, and Angling category bluefin tuna rules, Purse Seine fishery start date



## 2015 Bluefin Quotas

- Base quota percentages by category applied to ICCAT quota, then reduced proportionally per A7 to provide 68 mt for Longline category
- “Annual reallocation” from Purse Seine category to Reserve category (87.4 mt) (based on 2014 Purse Seine catch)
- Inseason transfer from Reserve to Longline category (34 mt)
- Inseason transfer from Reserve to Harpoon category (40 mt)
- Recent final rule: Additional quota for all quota categories resulting from ICCAT Rec. 14-05. Allowable underharvest from 2014 added to Reserve category (94.9 mt).



## **Bluefin Tuna Quota Rule**

Final rule published August 28, 2015 (80 FR 52198)

- Increases the baseline annual quota from 923.7 mt (established in 2011) by 135 mt to 1,058.79 mt
- Adjusts and codifies the baseline annual subquotas for the domestic fishing categories consistent with the process established in A7
- Makes minor modifications to Atlantic tunas purse seine “transfer at sea” regulations to clarify that this text was not meant to allow “transfer at sea” (prohibited by ICCAT), but is only meant to allow the routine, limited operations of an auxiliary vessel (i.e., a skiff) in assisting its associated purse seine vessel in bluefin tuna catch operations
- Specific for 2015 and consistent with A7, notice also announces:
  - Adjustment of the Reserve quota (+94.9 mt of 2014 underharvest)
  - Recalculation of the Purse Seine and Reserve category quotas that were announced in February to reflect the increased U.S. quota



## Bluefin Tuna Inseason Actions - 2015

### Daily Retention Limits:

➤ General category (large medium/giant):

January through March: 3

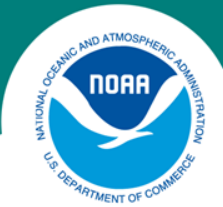
June through December: 4

➤ Angling category:

(Default limit of 1 school, large school, or small medium for private & HMS CHB: Jan. 1 – May 14)

Private vessels: 1 school + 1 large school/small medium (May 15 - Dec. 31)

HMS CHB: 2 school + 1 large school/small medium (May 15 - Dec. 31)



## **Bluefin Tuna Inseason Actions - 2015**

### Transfers:

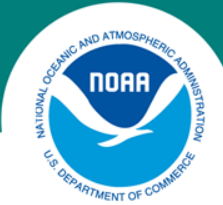
- 21 mt within General category from December 2015 to January-March 2015 (December 2014, A7 authority)
- 87.4 mt from Purse Seine category to Reserve category (February, using A7 formula)
- 34 mt from Reserve to Longline category (July)
- 40 mt from Reserve to Harpoon category (August)

Closure of Angling category Trophy South fishery: June 7

Purse Seine category fishery start date: July 6

(Per Amendment 7, NMFS starts the fishery annually between June 1 and August 15)





## **Status of A7 Lawsuit**

- Complaint from pelagic longline fishermen and related businesses, predominantly from North Carolina but also from New York and Florida
- Department of Justice filed partial motion to dismiss
- Judge granted partial motion to dismiss
- Briefing scheduled for this fall



## **Bluefin Reporting Requirement for General, Harpoon, and Charter/Headboat Categories**

- Vessels required to report the length of all bluefin retained or discarded dead through online catch reporting system within 24 hours of landing or end of each trip
- Website: [hmspermits.noaa.gov/permitidlandings.asp](https://hmspermits.noaa.gov/permitidlandings.asp)

Dealer data versus Online reporting; Jan – July 2015

	<b>Dealer Data</b>	<b>Online Reports</b>	<b>Online vs Dealer (%)</b>
# bluefin	983	408	42%
# vessels	292	61	21%
# trips	656	199	30%

- Outreach to the fishery must continue



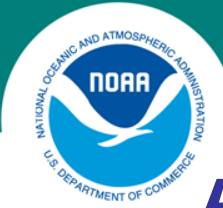
## Purse Seine Fishery 2015 to Date

- Fishery started on July 6, 2015 (start date set annually, within a range from June 1 and August 15)
- Exempted Fishing Permit (EFP) issued (for a second year); Allows retention of bluefin measuring 73" to < 81", which would otherwise be discarded due to annual retention limits  
*(regulations allow a tolerance of large medium bluefin of 15% by weight of total giant bluefin landed in a fishing year)*
- Net effect of the EFP: During the first two trips of the season, 36% and 31%, respectively, of the retained bluefin (by weight) were in the large medium size range that otherwise would have been mostly regulatory discards



## Purse Seine Fishery; Comparison of Recent Catches

Metric	2013	2014 (w/EFP)	2015 (w/EFP)	Average Change (w/EFP vs. 2013)
Observer Coverage	60%	100%	100%	
Landings	28.8 mt	37.6 mt	34.0 mt	+ 7.0 mt
Large medium (73 to <81")	1.85 mt	9.57 mt	11.5 mt	+ 8.7 mt
Giant (81"+)	26.99 mt	28.07 mt	22.5 mt	+ 1.7 mt
Dead Discards	13.7 mt	4.2 mt	4.9 mt	-9.2 mt
Catch	42.5 mt	41.8 mt	38.9 mt	- 2.2 mt



## **A7 & the 2015 Pelagic Longline Fishery**

- Appeals of Individual Bluefin Quota eligibility

### Initial Administrative Decisions

- 1 Approved (eligibility of permit)
- 12 Dismissed (may contact the National Appeals Office by specified deadline as a next step)



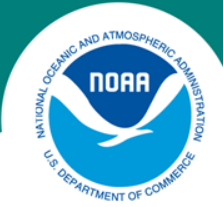
## **Individual Bluefin Quota Rules 2015 vs 2016**

### 2015

- All bluefin tuna retained or discarded dead must be accounted for in the electronic IBQ system
- No minimum amount of quota to fish, and can fish with 'quota debt' but quota debt accrues.
- Accountable at the end of the year (i.e., any remaining quota debt deducted from 2016 allocation)

### 2016

- Minimum amount of quota required to go fishing (275 lb in Atlantic; 550 lb in Gulf of Mexico)
- Cannot depart on a subsequent trip if there is quota debt or less than the minimum amount required.



## **Electronic Monitoring (EM) Program Status**

- Installations
- Logistical and technical challenges
- Status of review and sampling
- Example video



## **Electronic Monitoring (EM) Program Status**

- Installations: 110 vessels out of 136 eligible  
(2 or 3 more likely in September)
- Number of hard drives received: June: 86; July: 105
- Foremost logistical challenge: Procedures for mailing hard drives

When mailing the hard drives to the NMFS contractor, some vessel operators did not include a pre-paid mailing label to enable return mailing of the replacement hard drive back to the vessel





## **Electronic Monitoring (EM) Program Status**

### Examples of Technical Challenges and Solutions

<b>Problem</b>	<b>Diagnosis / Solution</b>
Camera recording not triggered	Sensor unit plug came out
System interference with VHF	Move wires or camera location
System not recording	Service call to reset sensor
Mouse not working	Unplug, wipe off moisture
System displays only cursor	Service call to update software
Camera blank	System not turned on
Monitor says not signal	Loose connection
No signal from camera	Awaiting vessel return to port
Camera has condensation	Service call to replace & seal
Damaged hydraulic sensor	Mail replacement sensor
No camera feed	Power system compatibility



## **Electronic Monitoring (EM) Program Status**

- Sampling design: Two-stage stratified random sampling
  - Primary sampling unit = trip
  - Second sampling unit = set
  - Stratified by area and season
- Sample size: 10% of trips; minimum one per vessel
- Video review: Quality control, then detailed review
  - Technician finds fish in the video, counts and IDs
  - Software under development to isolate relevant images (i.e., fish) to reduce video review time



## **Longline Category Bluefin Quota Monitoring**

- Current data found online (e.g., landings, dead discards, total catch, % of quota, pelagic longline and purse seine fisheries):

<https://portal.southeast.fisheries.noaa.gov/cs/main.html#>

- SERO Catch Shares Program, Public home page:  
Go the tab called “BFT Catch”



## Welcome to the Southeast Regional Office (SERO) Catch Share Programs - Public Home

This page is home to the Commercial Red Snapper and Grouper-Tilefish Individual Fishing Quota (IFQ) programs, the Headboat Collaborative pilot (HBC) program, and the Bluefin Tuna (BFT) Individual Bycatch Quota (IBQ) program. The IFQ and HBC programs are intended to reduce the race to catch quotas by allocating individual fishermen or groups of fishermen quota that can be harvested throughout the fishing year. The BFT program is intended to limit bluefin tuna landings and discards and provide fishermen with incentives to avoid bluefin tuna interactions. Each of the programs is intended to achieve both conservation and economic goals through more efficient and more profitable harvesting and marketing practices.

### Important Messages - Please Read Before Logging Into Your Account

- **BFT** A document (Buyers and Sellers\_Permit Transfers.pdf) describing IBQ Actions you must take if you buy or sell a permit or vessel is available under Additional Information or by navigating to this weblink:  
[http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/sfa/hms/documents/fmp/am7/buyers\\_and\\_sellers\\_permit\\_transfers.pdf](http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/sfa/hms/documents/fmp/am7/buyers_and_sellers_permit_transfers.pdf)
- **ALL** As of 8/25/2015, the current version of the Catch Shares Online System is 5.0.7. If you do not have this version, please close your web browser and reopen the application.
- **BFT** If you would like to pay back your bluefin tuna quota debt (using leased quota or the recent 551 lb disbursement, for example) you must contact us in writing. Please send an email to [nmfs.hms.ibq@noaa.gov](mailto:nmfs.hms.ibq@noaa.gov) with your name, business name (if applicable) phone number, permit number, and amount of quota you would like applied against debt. In the future, the online system will have an automated function for quota debt repayment
- **BFT** NMFS recently transferred 34 metric tons (mt) of Atlantic bluefin tuna quota from the Reserve category to the Longline category. As a result of this quota transfer, 0.25 mt (551 lb) of Individual Bluefin Quota (IBQ) was distributed to the Vessel Accounts of eligible permits (i.e., those permits eligible for shares) associated with a vessel. For those permits that qualified for IBQ shares and are not associated with a vessel at the time of the quota transfer, the IBQ will not be usable by the permit holder (i.e., may not be leased or used to account for bluefin tuna) until the permit is associated with a vessel. Further, the allocated IBQ will include the regional designation,



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## SERO Catch Shares Programs

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[Important Messages](#) | [IFQ Landings](#) | [HBC Landings](#) | [BFT Catch](#) | [About](#)

#### BFT Catch for 2015 in whole weight

Share Category	Quota Distributed	Landings to Date	Dead Discards to Date	Total Catch to Date	% Quota Remaining	Quota Remaining
Pelagic Longline	680,320	67,838	2,752	70,590	89.0	609,730
ATL	244,977	59,704	2,422	62,126	74.0	182,851
GOM	132,651	8,134	330	8,464	93.0	124,187
Purse Seine	158,070	74,784	10,795	85,579	45.0	72,491
NED	55,115	3,338	90	3,428	93.0	51,687



## Longline Category Bluefin Quota Monitoring

Bluefin Catch to date\* (whole weight, pounds)

Share Category	Landings	Dead Discards	Total Catch
Pelagic longline	67,838	2,752	70,590
Atlantic	59,704	2,422	62,126
Gulf	8,134	330	8,464

Note: Abridged version of data table found online

\* 8/31/2015



## Longline Category Bluefin Quota Monitoring

### Bluefin Landings 2014 vs. 2015

January – June landings

2014: 309 bluefin (64.8 mt)

2015: 114 bluefin (23.4 mt)

195 bluefin (41.4 mt) reduction first half of year



## **Longline Category Bluefin Quota Monitoring**

### Quota Debt Status:

- 56 vessels have accounted for bluefin catch (landed or discarded dead bluefin) in the IBQ system
- 9 vessels are in quota debt, ranging from 424 to 3,900 lb
- In other words, 16% of the vessels that have accounted for bluefin in the IBQ system are in quota debt
- Average amount of quota debt: 1,557 lb
- Total amount of quota debt: 14,011 lb
- The July 31 quota transfer from the Reserve to the Longline category provided an additional 551 lb for each of the 136 permit holders who received IBQ shares under A7

Quota debt data through July 2015





## **Longline Category Bluefin Quota Monitoring**

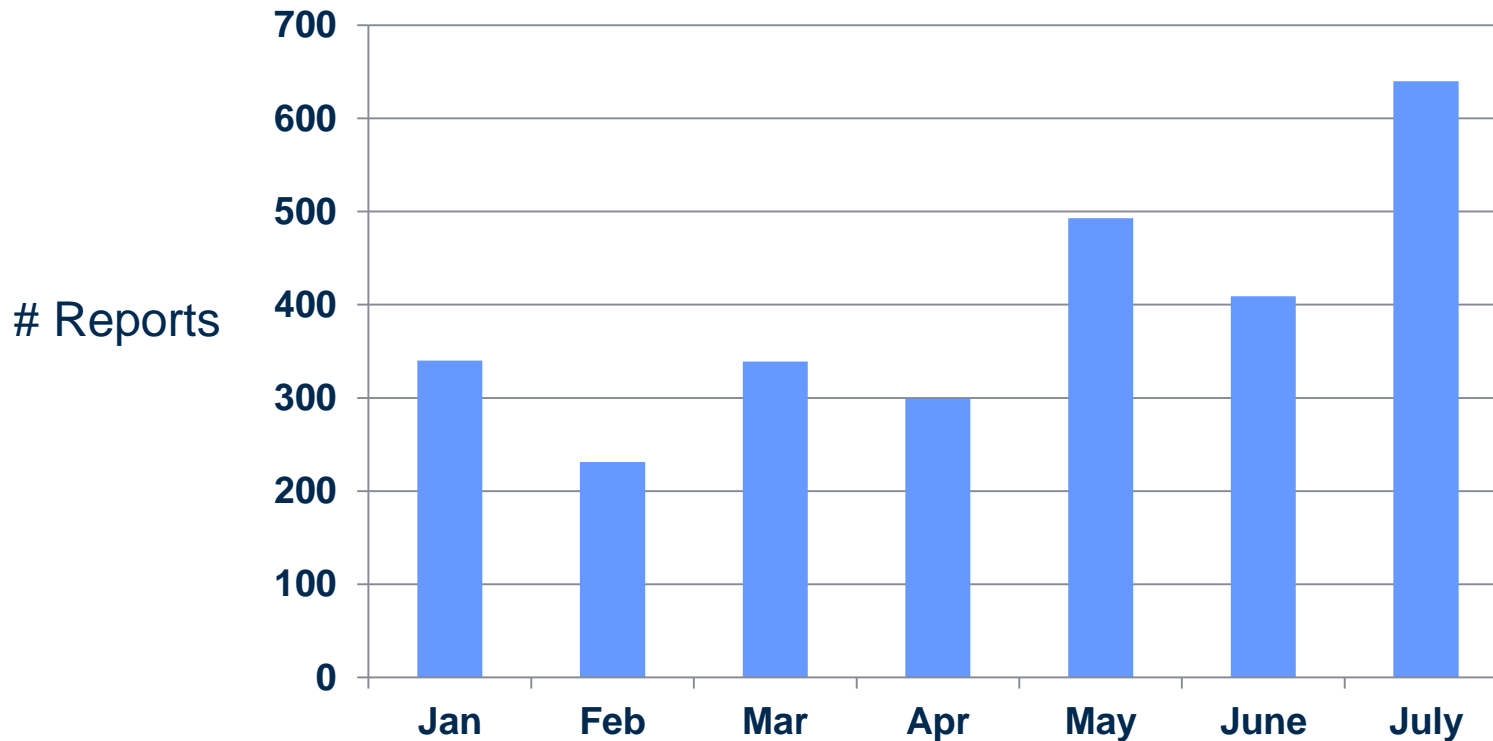
### Bluefin Quota Leasing Status (through July 2015):

- Leases between different owners ('shareholders'): 20 transactions
- Total leased: 91,030 lb (41.3 mt) (including Purse Seine shareholders)
- Average leased: 2,242 lb (~1 mt) (not including leases from Purse Seine shareholders)
- Overall distribution: 61% of leased quota went to Longline (25.3 mt) shareholders and 39% of leased quota went to Purse Seine shareholders; no Longline to Purse Seine leasing occurred
- Leased bluefin originating from Purse Seine shareholders: 58% (52,911 lb) (17,637 lb to a Longline vessel)
- Price information provided for 7 transactions:
  - Average: \$ 3.14/ lb (\$ 3.67/lb not including the lowest price)
  - Range: \$ .01 to \$ 4.50/ lb



## Longline Category Bluefin Quota Monitoring

# of Vessel Monitoring System (VMS) Pelagic Longline Reports

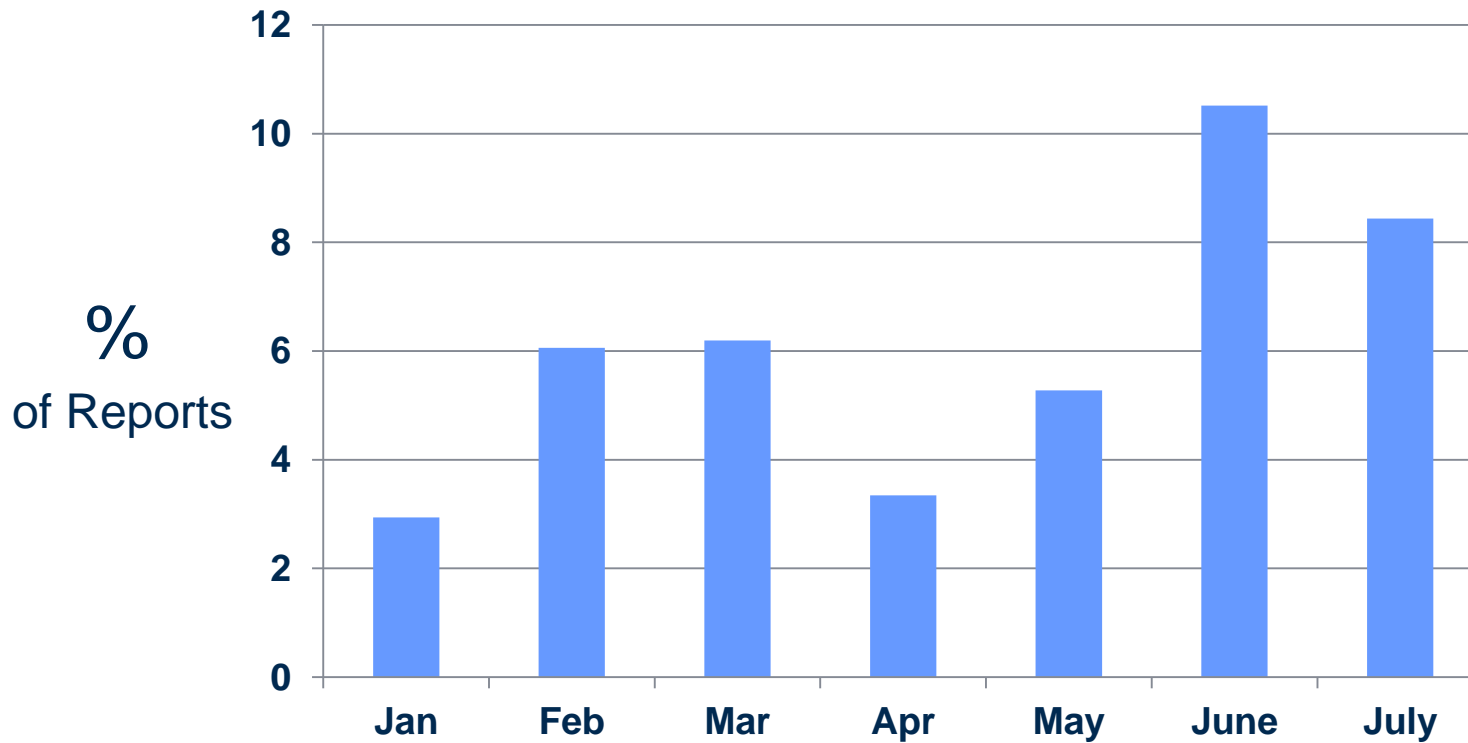


Note: Requirement to submit a report for each longline set



## Longline Category Bluefin Quota Monitoring

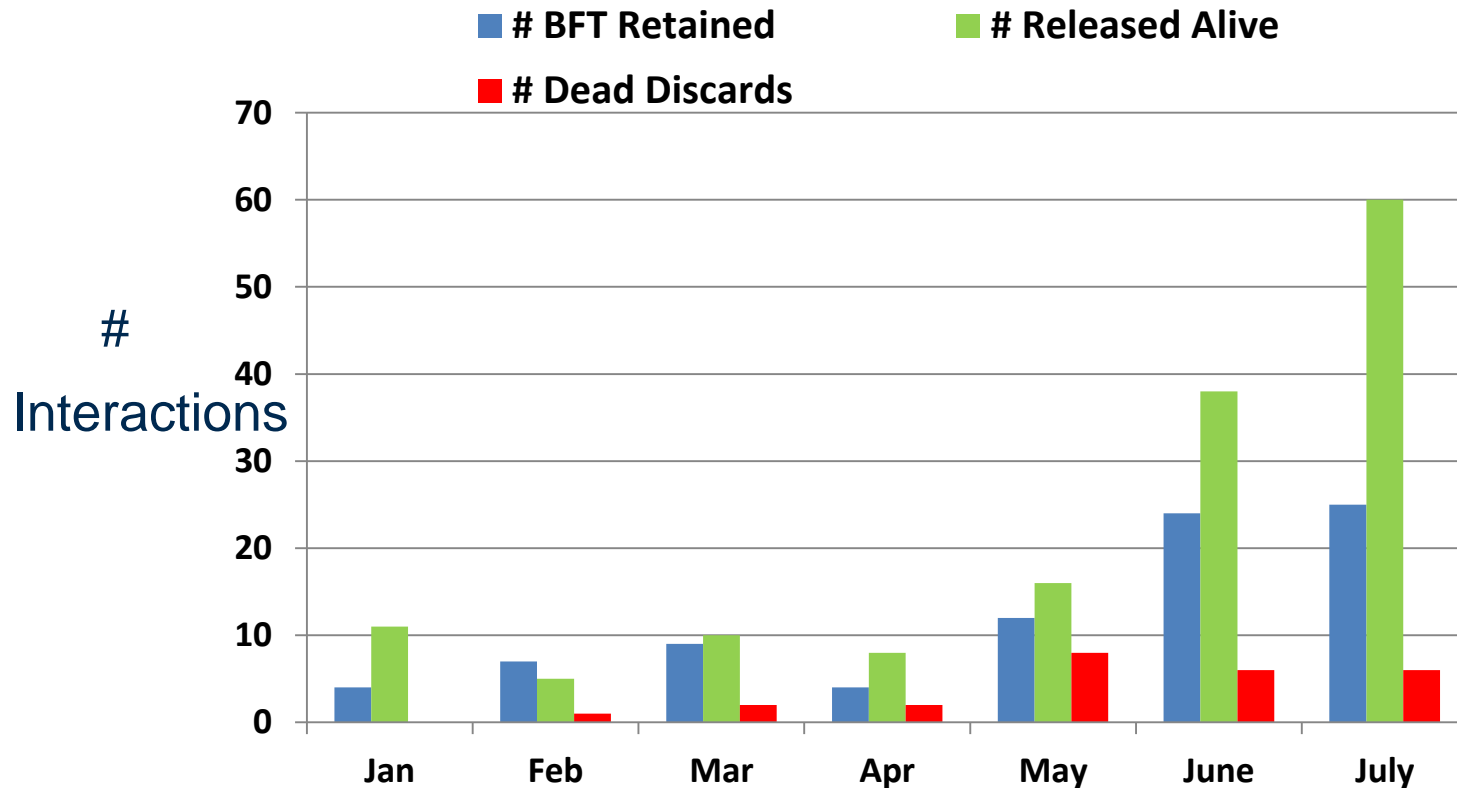
Percentage of VMS reports noting interactions with Bluefin





## Longline Category Bluefin Quota Monitoring

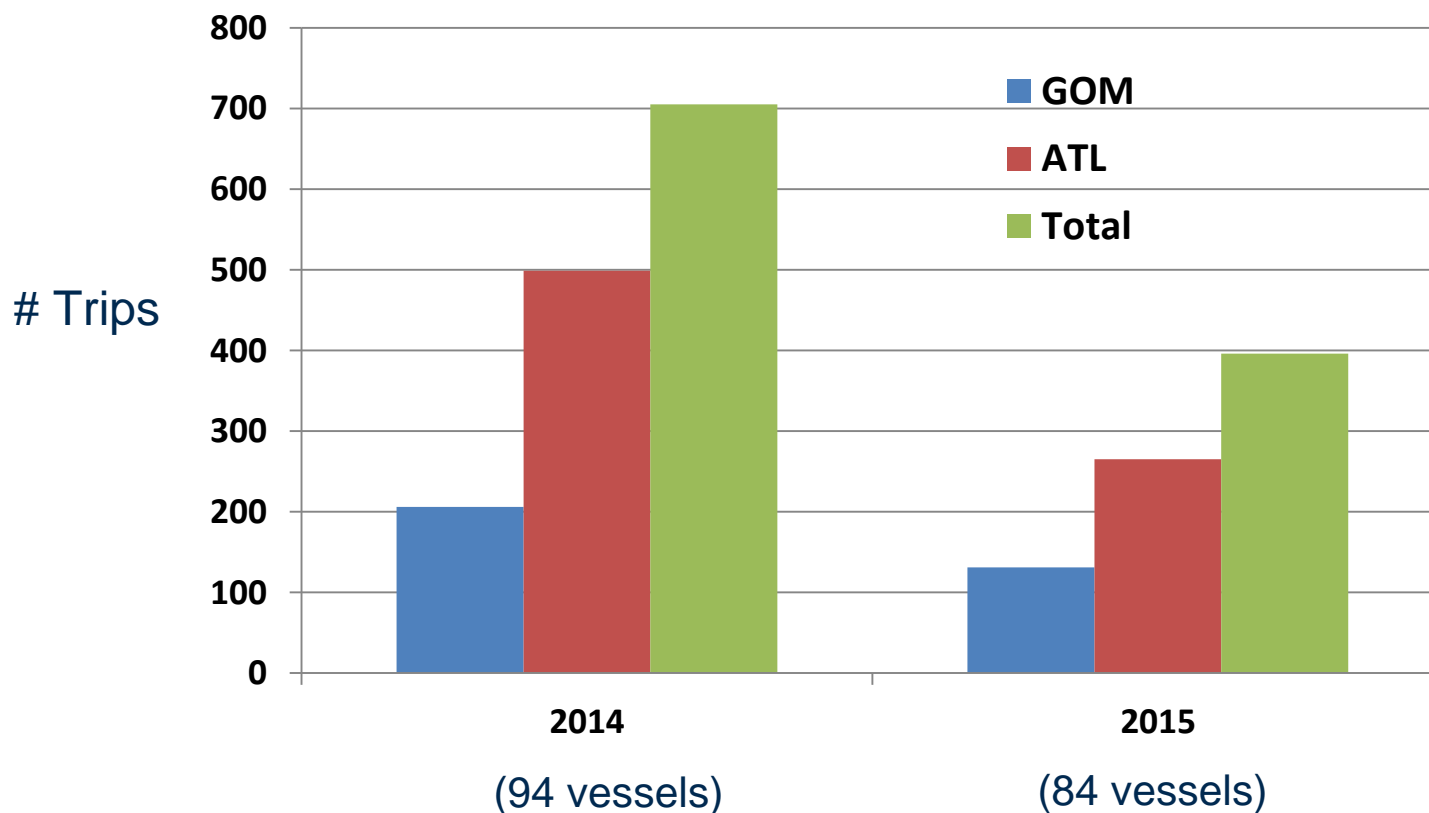
### VMS Data: Interactions with Bluefin





## Longline Category: 2014 vs. 2015 (Jan – Jun)

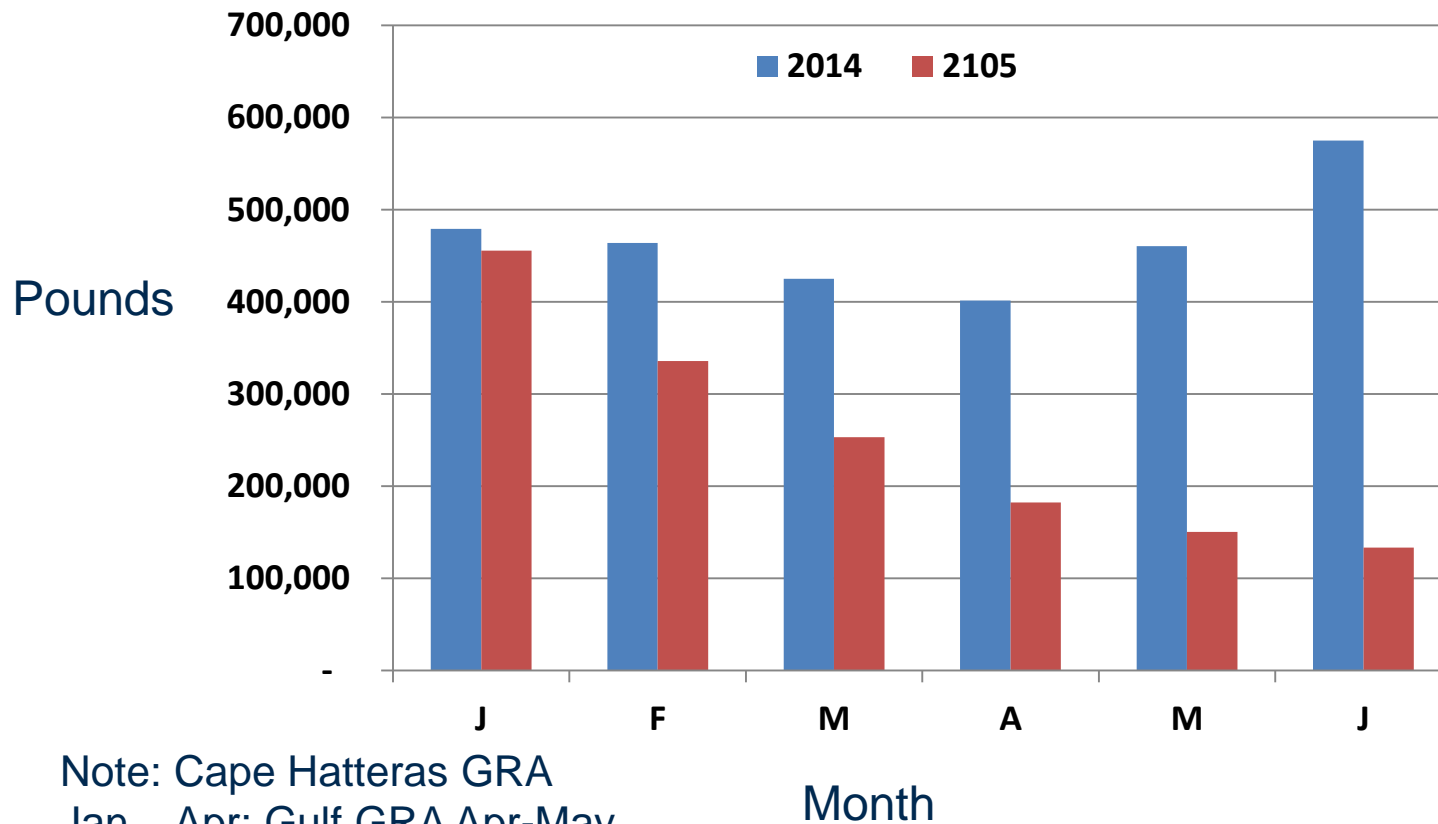
Number of Trips (based on Landings, e-Dealer data)





## Longline Category: 2014 vs. 2015 (Jan – Jun)

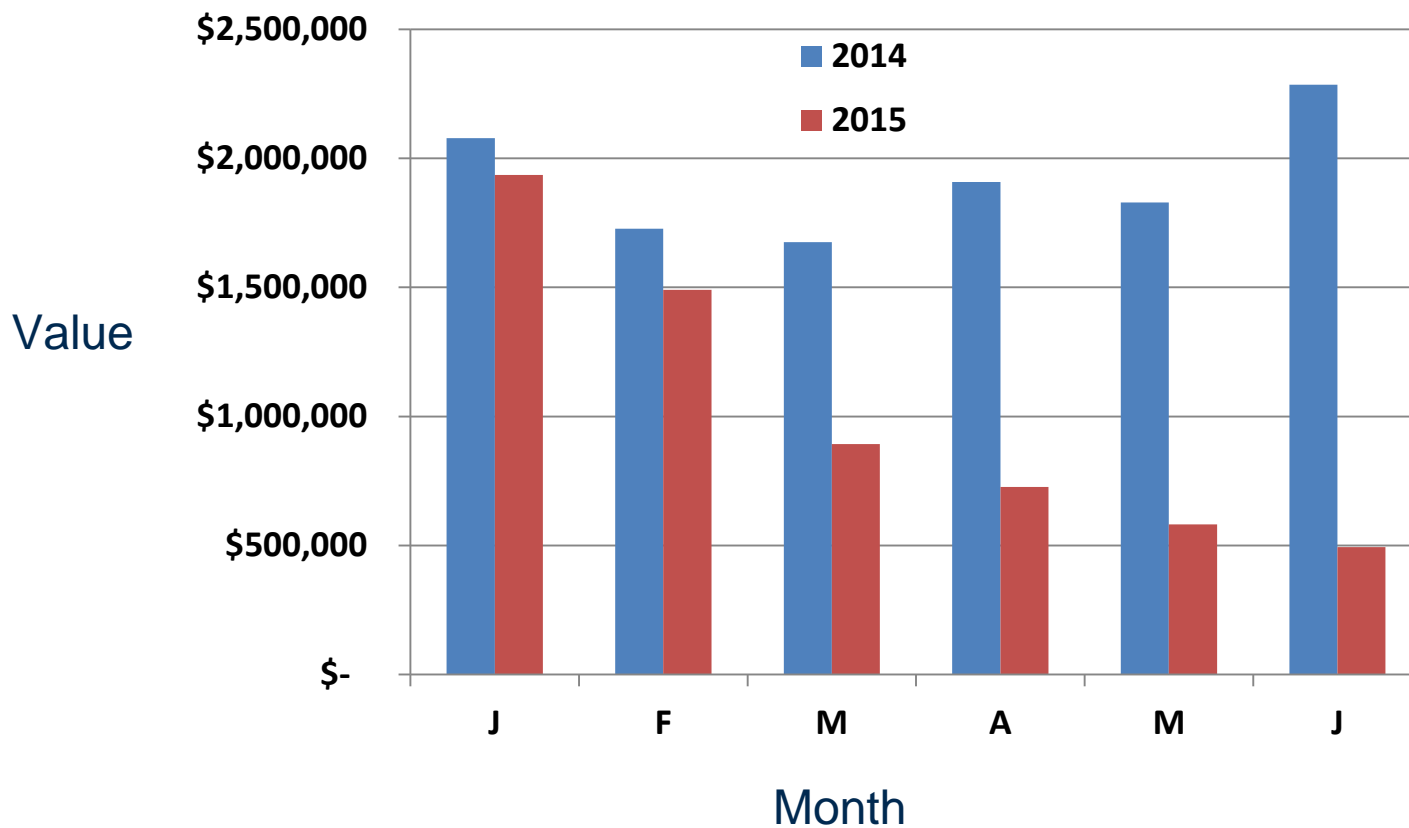
Landings (dressed weight; e-Dealer data)





## Longline Category: 2014 vs. 2015 (Jan – Jun)

Ex-Vessel Value of Target Species (e-Dealer data)





## **Longline Category: 2014 vs. 2015 (Jan – Jun)**

### Possible Reasons for Effort and Target Species Value Trends

- Uncertainty in the fishery resulting from Amendment 7 regulations
- Low market price for target species
- Imports of target species
- Participation in the mahi fishery
- 94 vessels fished 2014 vs. 84 vessels in 2015  
(same period Jan-Jun)
- Other factors (e.g., “devalued fishery” ?)





**Questions?**